

**WAC 314-55-020 Cannabis license qualifications and application process—Licensing change requests.** Each cannabis license application is unique and evaluated individually. The board may inquire and request documents regarding all matters in connection with the cannabis license application.

(1) **Cannabis license qualification criteria and application process.** To be issued a license, all cannabis license applicants must meet the qualifications required by the board. The board will verify that the proposed business meets the minimum requirements for the type of cannabis license requested. The qualifications and application process for a cannabis license include:

(a) **A background check** to evaluate whether the applicant qualifies for a license, consistent with WAC 314-55-040 and 314-55-045.

(i) The background check includes completion of a personal and criminal history form provided by the board. The applicant is responsible for paying all fees required by the Washington state patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(ii) Financiers are subject to background checks equivalent to that of a license applicant. Financiers are responsible for paying all fees required by the Washington state patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(b) **Inquiry** to verify the source of funds used to acquire an existing business and start the business, the applicant's right to the real and personal property, and to verify the true party or parties of interest.

(c) **An inspection** of the proposed or currently licensed business location to determine if the applicant has met all of the requirements of the license or proposed changes to the licensed premises.

(d) **A residency check to confirm Washington state residency.** Under RCW 69.50.331 (1)(b), all applicants applying for a cannabis license must have resided in the state of Washington for at least six months prior to applying for a cannabis license.

(i) All business entities including, but not limited to, partnerships, employee cooperatives, associations, nonprofit corporations, corporations and limited liability companies applying for a cannabis license must be formed in Washington state.

(ii) All members, governors, or agents of business entities must also meet the six-month residency requirement. Managers or agents who manage a licensee's place of business must also meet the six-month residency requirement.

(e) **Applicants must be current in any tax obligations** to the Washington state department of revenue and other state agencies, as an individual or as part of any entity in which they have an ownership interest. Applicants must sign an attestation that, under penalty of denial or loss of licensure, statements concerning the status of tax obligations are true and correct.

(f) **Operating plan.** Each cannabis license applicant must submit an operating plan outlining required elements for the location as provided in this chapter pertaining to the type of license being sought. The operating plan must be submitted using an operating plan template supplied by the board. The operating plan must also include a floor plan or site plan drawn to scale that illustrates the entire operation being proposed.

After obtaining a license, the license holder must notify the board's licensing and regulation division and receive prior approval

before making any changes in their operating plan, floor plan, or both.

(g) If an applicant does not respond to the board's licensing and regulation division requests for information, documentation, or both within the timelines provided, the application may be administratively withdrawn, closed or denied.

(2) **Certificate of compliance.** Consistent with RCW 69.50.331 (8)(e), the board will issue a certificate of compliance if the proposed business premises meets the minimum distance requirements as of the date the application was received by the board. If the physical location changes during the application process, the certificate of compliance will be issued for the date that the premises change was received by the board. Applicants who were granted licenses prior to adoption of this rule may operate their business at the location notwithstanding a later occurring, otherwise qualifying minimum distance factor.

(3) **Notice of cannabis license application.** Consistent with RCW 69.50.331 the board will send a notice to cities and counties, tribal governments, and port authorities regarding the cannabis license application within the jurisdiction. The local authority, tribal government, or port authority has 20 days to respond with a recommendation to approve the application or an objection to the applicant, location, or both.

(4) **Notice of cannabis license application to tribal governments.** Consistent with RCW 69.50.331, the board will send a notice to tribal governments when an applicant or licensee proposes to be located within the exterior boundaries of the reservation of a federally recognized Indian tribe. The tribal government has 20 days to respond with an approval to the application. If written approval is not received within 30 days, the board assumes the tribe does not consent to the applicant's location and the applicant must find a new location.

(5) **Displaying notice of new cannabis license application or application for change of location of an existing licensed business.** Applicants for a new cannabis producer, processor, retailer, transportation, or research license or those who apply to change their location must display a notice provided by the board on the outside of the premises to be licensed notifying the public that the premises are subject to an application for a cannabis license. The notice must be posted within seven days of submitting the location confirmation form for new licenses or the change of location application for existing licensees. The board may check for compliance with this requirement at its discretion. The notice must:

(a) Not be changed. The licensee must post the notice sent by the board without changing the text in any way;

(b) Be noticeably displayed on, or immediately next to, the premises subject to the application and in the location that is most likely to be seen by the public;

(c) Be of a size that can be readily seen by the public. At a minimum these notices must be 8 1/2 x 11 inches;

(d) Be posted within seven business days of the date the notice is sent to the applicant by the board; and

(e) The notice must be posted for 14 consecutive days.

(6) **Application holds and withdrawals.** The board may place licensing change applications made by a licensee on hold if the change application is reasonably related to an ongoing investigation.

(a) The board may withdraw licensing change applications pending the results of an adjudicative proceeding regarding a violation of

this chapter. Depending on the outcome of the adjudicative proceeding, the licensee may reapply for the withdrawn licensing change application(s).

(b) Examples of licensing change applications that may be affected under this subsection include:

- (i) Application for additional funding;
- (ii) Application to add a medical cannabis endorsement;
- (iii) Assumption of a license;
- (iv) Change in governing people, percentage owned, or stock/unit ownership;

(v) Change of location;

- (vi) Expanding plant canopy to maximum allotted;
- (vii) Request to change cannabis site or operating plan;
- (viii) Request to add a processor license; or
- (ix) Splitting a producer or processor license.

(7) **Industry tracking.**

(a) To help the board track employment and personnel trends of the industry as it continues to develop, the board requests that applicants seeking new licensure and licensees seeking license renewal provide the following information:

(b) Employee compensation and benefit data:

(i) Whether the applicant/licensee provide a living wage (at least 150 percent of the state minimum wage) to 85 percent or more of its hourly employees;

(ii) Whether the applicant/licensee will provide health insurance to at least 85 percent of its hourly employees;

(iii) Whether the applicant/licensee will provide a defined benefit pension plan to at least 85 percent of its employees;

(iv) Whether the applicant/licensee will provide five or more paid sick days annually to at least 85 percent of its employees;

(v) Whether there is a signed labor peace agreement or collective bargaining agreement with a labor organization in place.

(8) The issuance or approval of a license is not a license for, or an approval of, any violation of local rules or ordinances including, but not limited to: Building and fire codes, zoning ordinances, and business licensing requirements.

(9) **Social equity applicant.** A person qualifying for the social equity in cannabis program under WAC 314-55-570 may apply for a cannabis license consistent with the provisions of this chapter.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.335, 69.50.336, 69.50.342, and 2022 c 16. WSR 22-21-058, § 314-55-020, filed 10/12/22, effective 11/12/22. Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.342 and 69.50.345. WSR 21-02-096, § 314-55-020, filed 1/6/21, effective 2/6/21. Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.325, 69.50.342, 69.50.345, and 69.50.369. WSR 18-22-055, § 314-55-020, filed 10/31/18, effective 12/1/18. Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.342 and 69.50.345. WSR 16-11-110, § 314-55-020, filed 5/18/16, effective 6/18/16; WSR 15-11-107, § 314-55-020, filed 5/20/15, effective 6/20/15. Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.325, 69.50.331, 69.50.342, 69.50.345. WSR 13-21-104, § 314-55-020, filed 10/21/13, effective 11/21/13.]